

November 11, 1954

CONFIDENTIAL

Dr. William F. Ashe
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Dear Bill:

I hasten to reply to your letter of November 9. I should let you know that my haste comes of necessity, since I leave Cincinnati on next Monday to be in England for the three weeks thereafter.

My concern, and possibly that of others as well, as to the purposes and activities of Dr. Young, does not arise out of his industrial medical practice in North American Aviation, Inc., which may be, and, from your report, probably is, good. Rather I am concerned with his professional viewpoint, which for certain reasons is open to some question in my mind; with his attitude toward medical education in our field, which I am convinced is adolescent, if not embryonic, although it may merely be designed to promote himself and his present and future in his professional relations with North American and others; and with what he is likely to involve Ohio State University and yourself in, by way of confusion of purpose and accomplishment.

As to his professional attitude and others, I wonder what are the purposes and policies of the industrial medical service which he promoted some time ago - an incorporated medical service, the name of which evades my memory, was advertised in some journal, trade or professional, I can't say which. Someone sent the sheet to me or inquired about it, and I thought I could find it, but I cannot, probably because my informant or questioner wanted it returned. This may be in existence yet or it may have died, but matters of both purpose and competence and of medical advertising entered into the situation. This may have been the result of youth and enthusiasm, but I am probably being charitable in advancing this possible explanation.

As to his ideas on medical education, expressed in an informal meeting in Chicago some time ago, and in his issuance of a bulletin to medical colleges in 1951 announcing a residency course of training jointly sponsored by OSU and North American Aviation, Inc., the less said the better. Making every possible allowance for his being inarticulate in the expression of his ideas, the calm presumption set forth in this bulletin that this course would qualify a man for a diploma from the University, for the practice of industrial medicine, and for Board certification, was nothing

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short of childish. And the manner of doing it on a professional letterhead from his own office gave one to wonder where the University fitted into the picture. It was inept to say the least, certainly not less so, in relation to some sort of acceptable and carefully designed training, than that offered by the General Motors Corporation in their joint relationship to the Saginaw General Hospital. I was very cautious in commenting on the program as announced, which, for obvious reasons, came up for comment here and for queries from the Council on Medical Education and Hospitals of the AMA, saying that in due course the quality of the services in both intramural and extramural training would have to be looked into. What you tell me indicates that the plant program may be potentially good, but who supervises the student; and is he learning or merely doing a job? You know the problem here as well as I do, but I still feel some concern for what you may be held responsible for by your friends and associates in this field. That is the main reason for my skepticism as to anything that does not meet the eye. Moreover neither OSU nor any other school can afford to tie itself up in any training program with a single industrial organization, particularly one in which the principal in the school is employed.

Now as to Bob Page and his latest enthusiasm. The Occupational Health Institute, if it is to be judged by its pronouncements, is engaged in (1) surveying the quality of industrial medical facilities and services and certifying those that pass minimum standards of excellence; (2) providing fellowships for training in occupational medicine; (3) giving advice and guidance to industry in matters medical and hygienic; and (4) sponsoring investigations in the field of industrial health. These represent appreciable expansions of the functions which were taken on, briefly and unsuccessfully, for lack of funds and prestige, by the American Foundation of Occupational Health, which, as you probably know, was founded by the Industrial Medical Association to promote industrial medical practice by inspecting and certifying industrial medical services (taking over this function from the American College of Surgeons), and to further medical training by the provision of fellowships. The present organization was lifted by Page out of the control of I.M.A., but is presumed by him to be entitled to the aid and encouragement of I.M.A. through its various organizational arms. The organization has no official professional sponsorship, and several professional members of its Board of Directors were appointed ex-officio as frontespieces, but have no knowledge of its plans and policies. As near as I can discover from making as broad an inquiry as circumstances permitted (this matter was discussed seriously and with some considerable concern in the last meeting of the Council on Industrial Health, since Bill Shepherd, Chairman of the Council, is a member (without any knowledge whatever of the situation) of the Board of Directors of the OHI, having been put on the Board ex-officio; as part of the professional front). Page is running the show, taking advantage of his office as President of I.M.A. to carry I.M.A. into it, and counting on his own prestige, as Medical Director of Standard Oil Company (N. J.) to swing the financial and professional weight

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required to make it go. Quite a number of his adversaries are openly critical, and some of his friends are wondering whether or not he has developed delusions of grandeur. Meanwhile he, after instigating this organization, went away to Europe and the Near East for several months, and had not returned at my last account. The involvement of Steve Halos in the thing as Vice President, is a source of either amusement or of deep concern to various people, dependent upon whether they regard Steve as a crook or merely as a crude and not very bright fellow. No one is prepared to deny that he knows how to look out for himself in financial matters, and therefore his involvement in any organization of high moral, professional and essentially philanthropic purposes, has caused some eyebrows to lift. Some of the people in industry view with concern the certification of their facilities by the College of Surgeons (now withdrawn), then by the Foundation (now about to be withdrawn), and now by the Institute. What next, they ask, and what does it mean? If this falls on its face, who then? Moreover, many of us feel that an agency of this sort, which solicits membership and supporting funds from industry alone, is in a poor position to operate critically in relation to the medical and hygienic efforts of industry. Who does what, and to whom, and who pays for it?

As you can see, this organization has no relationship to anything, and least of all to the Interim Board of Occupational Medicine, (which is soon to dissolve when Occupational Medicine takes its place with Public Health, and Aviation Medicine, as an affiliate of the American Board of Preventive Medicine). In my opinion the Institute will die of starvation, and in evidence of my feeling that it should disappear or utterly change its form, I have advised Ethyl Corporation not to make any contribution to its support until I am satisfied as to its purposes, policies and standing. It will either have to make itself understood and professionally responsible, or it is finished. I do not know a medical director who at this point is prepared to urge his industry to support it. No doubt there will be some, but they cannot be enough for even one of the functions undertaken, and they will not continue unless there is a sound program. The cost of the surveys and certifications alone amounts to forty to sixty thousand dollars per year, according to the records of the College of Surgeons, and their program was recognized, by themselves, not to be entirely adequate. At this time the I.M.A. is unhappy, the other professional groups are indifferent or antagonistic, and in my opinion, Bob has either gone off the deep end or has dealt hastily, arrogantly and irresponsibly with serious professional functions.

These, of course, are opinions on people and situations which are expressed to you in confidence. I do not allow myself to indulge in gossip or to draw conclusions from hearsay evidence, but one has to be cautious not to be drawn into relationships that are disastrous. I am prepared to give you any advice I can, even when it is based on uncertainties and imponderables, since you, as well as I, are put to the necessity of taking certain actions, which if they are mistakes, are likely to be irretrievable.

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This has developed into quite a letter - more in fact than I had time for.
But I do not begrudge the time.

With kindest regards and best wishes, as always,

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

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